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C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 003769

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FOR NEA/ARPI AND G/TIP

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/22/2015

TAGS: PHUM PREL PGOV KCRM SOCI ECON KU

SUBJECT: INTERIOR MINISTER RESTATES KUWAIT'S COMMITMENT TO PROTECT EXPATRIATE WORKERS

REF: A. KUWAIT 3588

1B. KUWAIT 3532 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

11. (C) During an August 20 meeting with First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior Shaykh Nawaf Al-Sabah, the Ambassador emphasized the need for the Government of Kuwait to maintain momentum on recent efforts to improve the working conditions of expatriate laborers and combat trafficking in persons (ref B). He stressed the need for measures to protect domestic workers, who fall under the authority of the MOI and not the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor (MOSAL). As an example, he encouraged the GOK to extend legal protection to domestic employees and restated the need to work closely with international bodies such as International Labor Organization (ILO) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), noting their expertise in establishing shelters and legal consultation and labor reconciliation centers. Shaykh Nawaf informed the Ambassador that the MOI was an active partner in the interministerial committee headed by MOSAL, and that the GOK was working hard to end human trafficking. He said the GOK sought to be a safe place for expatriate workers and steps were underway to stop individual acts of abuse and inform the public of international labor standards. He added that the GOK was reviewing existing labor laws and would coordinate with the UN on setting appropriate labor standards.

12. (C) In a separate meeting, Abdullatif Al-Rodan, Secretary General of the Council of Ministers, told the

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Ambassador the GOK was very serious about combating trafficking in persons and the Prime Minister was personally involved in anti-TIP measures. He noted that the Council had discussed TIP during its August 13-14 meetings and was expected to make TIP-related announcements within weeks. (Note: Ambassador raised the issue with the Prime Minister on August 23. Report by septel. End note.)

13. (C) Comment: Shaykh Nawaf and Al-Rodan were well versed in the GOK's efforts to improve labor conditions for expatriate workers, indicating engagement at the highest levels of government. The GOK is determined to improve working conditions for foreign workers and has made steady progress on all elements of the action plan as well as self-identified areas for improvement. Re-designation of Kuwait's TIP ranking to Tier 2 Watch List would recognize the accomplishments made to date (ref B) and propel action toward additional improvements. End Comment.

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